

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 468 311

FL 027 391

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TITLE An Infusion Curriculum for the Heritage Speaker of Spanish.  
PUB DATE 2000-00-00  
NOTE 19p.; In: Proceedings for the Texas Foreign Language [Education] Conference (Austin, Texas, March 31-April 1, 2000); see FL 027 384.  
PUB TYPE Journal Articles (080) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
JOURNAL CIT Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education; v5 n1 p93-109 spec iss Fall 2000  
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Heritage Education; Higher Education; Hispanic American Students; \*Native Language Instruction; \*Spanish; \*Student Attitudes; Teaching Methods; Urban Areas

## ABSTRACT

This article presents an overview of the literature on program models for teaching Spanish to heritage speakers, noting definitions, intake and placement procedures, typical offerings, and effective approaches, and covering a proficiency orientation, infusion of subculture materials, study of sociolinguists, community involvement, and cooperative learning. It then focuses on three studies conducted in an urban commuter institution with a large number of heritage speakers to determine students' views of mixed classes, motivations for rejecting heritage classes, and assessment of their own language background and abilities. Finally, the article reports on an experiment to infuse materials about southwest Spanish into second-, third-, and fourth-semester classes. The experiment was well-received by students. It suggests both a permanent infusion curriculum for the regular Spanish course sequence and using this approach to interest additional heritage learners in classes tailored to their needs. Appendices present questionnaires and a description of southwest Spanish. (Contains 35 references.) (Author/SM)

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*An Infusion Curriculum For The Heritage Speaker Of Spanish\**

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## ***An Infusion Curriculum For The Heritage Speaker Of Spanish\****

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*The author presents an overview of the literature on program models for teaching Spanish to heritage speakers, noting definitions, intake and placement procedures, typical offerings, and effective approaches, and covering a proficiency orientation, infusion of subculture materials, study of sociolinguistics, community involvement, cooperative learning, etc. She then focuses on three studies conducted in an urban commuter institution with a large number of heritage speakers to determine students' views of mixed classes, motivations for rejecting heritage classes, and assessment of their own language background and abilities. Finally she reports on an experiment to infuse materials about Southwest Spanish into second-, third-, and fourth-semester classes. The experiment was well received by students and suggests both a permanent infusion curriculum for the regular Spanish course sequence and this approach to interesting some additional heritage learners in classes tailored to their needs.*

### **MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE HERITAGE SPEAKER**

Heritage speakers constitute a significant percentage of enrollments in many Spanish language programs, and the language knowledge and skills they bring to their studies are increasingly recognized as valuable national resources (Campbell and Peyton, 1998), resources that we must build upon and develop further rather than deprecate and attempt to replace (Latoja, 1997). Nevertheless, only 26 percent of Spanish programs in the nation offered heritage classes in 1990 (Wherritt, 1990), and only an estimated 32 percent do so currently. While we do not have clear statistical information regarding the number of programs that have enough heritage speakers to warrant special courses for those students, given the ever-growing number of Hispanic students in our schools we can well be concerned whether the needs of many are being well met at the 32 percent level. Mixed classes are still the norm in many settings (L. LeBlanc and Lally, 1997), and we have little to no information about any special efforts being made to meet the needs of heritage students within those classes when heritage classes are not available.

### **IDENTIFYING THE HERITAGE SPEAKER**

In practice, we refer to the target population as heritage speakers, Spanish speakers, native speakers, and a subset of false beginners, among other terms. We also may associate varying definitions with those terms, referring to those who speak Spanish in the home and community, those who hear Spanish in the home and community, those who are foreign-born and perhaps at least partly educated in a Spanish-speaking country, and those who may have spoken or heard the language in the home or community and studied it in school at some level for some period. Indeed, the profile is complex, even more so when we examine a thorough treat

\* Presented at the Texas Foreign Language Education Conference 2000 (TexFLEC 2000), University of Texas at Austin, March 31-April 1, 2000.

ment such as that of Valdes (1997), which highlights factors such as the country of origin, the length of residence in this country, the particular dialect and all its sociocultural associations, the proficiency level, prior language study, and range of prior academic success. While the literature has focused more on programs offered to the more fully proficient heritage or native-speaker student, with less attention given to programs for students with primarily listening skills only (D'Ambruoso, 1993), most of the types of students mentioned above are served within the framework of programs currently in operation.

#### WHAT THE LITERATURE TELLS US

Among the 32 percent of programs that offer courses for heritage speakers, there is no single way to identify the heritage student from among the rest and place him or her in the proper course. Schwartz (1985) indicates that some institutions use questionnaires about language use, some use interviews of potential students by faculty, some use credit equivalencies stated in the catalog (Schwartz, 1985), and some use self-placement, perhaps guided by a rubric that students use to make their decisions (LeBlanc and Lally, 1997). A few institutions use a special test to sort heritage speakers from other types of false beginners, such as that used at the University of Texas at El Paso, a test with some questions focused on language characteristics that only a heritage speaker would know and that are normally not taught in Spanish classes. Others use the same standardized tests that are used in gen-

eral for placing nonheritage students, such as those from Brigham Young University, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Florida (LeBlanc and Lally, 1997). Among these are the Wisconsin College Level Placement Examination, the SAT II, the OPI, and MAPS from ETS. Some 39 percent use local course-specific tests (Wherritt, 1990), which are thought by some researchers to be more effective placement tools (Blackie, 1997). Most of the tests measure listening and reading comprehension skills, however, and thus do not separate the students who speak and write the language from those who do not. Further, all the possible measures, tests, questionnaires, and interviews are subject to manipulation by students, who can respond or perform as they wish in order to appear less proficient and often do so (R. LeBlanc and Painchaud, 1985, Wherritt, 1990). In addition, in the case of self-placement with rubric or checklist, students at the lower end of proficiency may not have sufficient information about their capabilities to assess themselves accurately and may overestimate their abilities (Jordan, 1985).

Finally, while 79 percent of institutions offer a placement test, according to Wherritt (1990), far fewer require students to take it (49 percent), and even fewer require students to act on the basis of the results (Wherritt, 1990). In many instances students register below the level of their placement even though general or Spanish advisers may try to influence them to register at the proper level and/or in a heritage class. Schwartz (1985) reported that 42 percent of California students registered below placement level or in first

semester, as did Klee and Rogers (1989), who also indicated that students often did so in order to improve grade-point averages. Kondo (1999) also supports the concept of grade-point motivation and adds that most students are more interested in speaking skills than in reading-writing skills and thus are often not concerned about taking the higher levels. Wherritt (1990) notes that 88 percent of false beginners enter first semester and only 32 percent of institutions offer credit for the lower levels with a higher placement as an incentive to go to the higher level. In some cases, of course, state policy does not allow public institutions to give away credit hours in this manner. Finally, only 28 percent penalized students who chose the lower level by awarding no credit, even though there is a widespread concern about using limited higher education funds to reteach students skills they acquired elsewhere (LeBlanc and Lally, 1997).

The literature also tells us that most heritage programs are limited in scope, comprising only one or two years of courses and mixing heritage and nonheritage students by third year (D'Ambruso, 1993, and Villa, 1997). Since many heritage students, especially in the border areas, enter a program with Intermediate High or Advanced-level proficiency on the ACTFL scale, a level nonheritage students may not reach until the end of a major (Hiple and Manley, 1987), special offerings may be inadequate to addressing the need. Further, students in the upper-level classes may differ widely in their prior exposure to reading and writing the language. The nonheritage students

will likely have had exposure to all four language skills, although their speaking may still be in the Intermediate range. The heritage students who enter upper division with CLEP credits and no prior coursework in Spanish of any kind (15-20 percent at the author's institution) may have no prior experience with reading and writing the language. These students often report that they "read the CLEP reading passages aloud to themselves in order to hear them" and thus, along with their listening skills, achieved a score necessary to place in third year even though they had in some cases never read Spanish before, never written it, and, in not a few cases, spoken it little. In such instances, the program that has only one or two years of heritage courses is not meeting the needs of this type of heritage learner when he or she moves directly into upper-level literature courses, as is often the case. Further, many upper-level programs in the Southwest are heritage programs only by virtue of their populations, which may be primarily heritage speakers. To the extent that professors are unfamiliar with the characteristics of the students, the literature on the most effective program models for heritage students, and the need to consider language development in all courses (including culture, linguistics and literature), the students' needs are not met. Finally, although faculty generally want the subset of heritage students who are non-prestige dialect speakers to shift to a prestige form of the language, these same faculty are often unaware that, even in the best circumstances, this shift will not occur in one course. Hidalgo

(1993) indicates that in some programs in Mexico a student is expected to take 600 contact hours to make this shift.

The literature is clear on effective approaches for heritage students. Building proficiency is primary, as evident in newer texts such as those by Blanco et al (1995) and Roca (1999), which emphasize developing all the skills in task-related contexts of high interest levels to students. In addition, content-based instruction, sociolinguistics (Merino et al., 1993, Pino, 1997), classes to develop academic domains in Spanish (Sanchez, 1997, Carrasquillo and Sagan, 1998), community-based projects (Trueba, 1993, Pino, 1997, Varona, 1999), Chicano literature to infuse culture (Merino et al., 1993), cooperative learning (Valdes, 1997), and opportunities to tutor other students are all shown to facilitate student involvement and learning. All these approaches fit Valdes-Fallis (1978) recommendation of the comprehensive approach to instructing heritage students, as opposed to the "normative approach." Some students have already internalized society's negative views of their dialect (Roca, 1997), and some faculty continue in this negative vein with their own negative views of dialect and assumptions of the superiority of one variety of native speech over another (Koike and Liskin-Gasparro, 1999). If only the confident student will use the language extensively outside of class (Kondo, 1999), these faculty may be inhibiting their students' further learning in more than one way. In general, professors rate Chicanos below other heritage speakers and even below anglophones (Valdez, 1998), possibly because few faculty are from Mexico and are

thus less familiar with educated Mexican Spanish (as compared to their own variety) and even less familiar with the subset of Chicano speech. Given this situation, the confident heritage student in the Southwest should be rare.

#### **A MIXED-METHOD APPROACH TO WORKING WITH THE HERITAGE STUDENT**

At the author's urban, largely commuter institution, there were once lower-division heritage Spanish courses to serve a varied community of Spanish-speakers of many different national origins and from one to eight generations in the area. Many are of Mexican descent, however; and the number of minority students in the institution is approaching fifty per cent of the more than 18,000 students attending, according to recent enrollment figures. At one point, heritage students objected strenuously to being segregated into classes for Spanish-speakers and drew analogies to bilingual programs in the public schools, which they said also segregated students. Thus the courses were dropped from the curriculum. Recently, the heritage courses were offered again, with extensive publicity emphasizing the positive nature and potential benefits of the classes; but the courses did not make. Thus, heritage students continue to enroll in the standard communicative sequence, generally enrolled below their placement level. A few begin with an intermediate conversation and composition course, an intermediate culture course, or a special-purposes course, all of which can be more appropriate to their needs; but most choose the regular sequence.

Many first-year classes are more than fifty percent Hispanic; many second-year classes may be eighty percent Hispanic. Since there is no language requirement for students in most programs, it is often heritage students who are more interested in taking the classes. Cross-cultural communication modules and Chicano literature selections in Spanish have been used in some classes as an enrichment, although some students have reacted unexpectedly (since the literature recommends these selections as a way to infuse relevant culture) by saying they objected to reading about poor people (Gonzalez Pino and Pino, 1997). The University does not place heritage students effectively, since the required scantron placement test covers only listening and reading comprehension and tends to place heritage students higher than they feel comfortable. However, they can choose to ignore the placement; and many do so.

At the upper-level and Master's level, the program includes many elements recommended in the literature. Proficiency-building is facilitated through a series of three oral communication courses and three composition courses. Expansion into the academic domain is especially facilitated through an advanced reading course in which students work with materials from a variety of disciplines. Task-oriented activities and community-based activities are meshed and provided in a number of courses, depending on the instructor, and are particularly emphasized in internships in the community. There are courses at both levels on Southwest Spanish and Chicano literature, and

several instructors (though not all) use cooperative-learning techniques. Thus much of what has been recommended in the literature has been incorporated and used successfully at these levels, where most of the students are heritage speakers. Given that circumstance, the need has seemed particularly to infuse even more of these elements into the regular lower-division program since the students were not interested in enrolling in special courses.

### STUDYING THE CONTEXT

A first step was to determine what students' perspectives were regarding the classes they were in, the type of classes they wanted and why, and their own language variety, abilities and needs. During 1998, 1999, and 2000 students responded to questionnaires on these topics so that faculty could consider the findings and their implications for an even more effective program design. The first questionnaire in 1998 (See appendix.) addressed how students viewed mixed classes, the kind of classes in which they were currently enrolled. Two hundred students in first through fourth semester participated; and of these, 45 percent classified themselves as heritage speakers. Twenty-five percent were true beginners, and thirty percent were other types of false beginners. A majority of the students (70 percent) thought that students should be allowed to register for any courses for which they did not have prior credit, even if overqualified (the current policy). One hundred percent of them thought that overqualified students wished to improve their grade-point average. A majority of the students

found the mixed class helpful, since 76 percent could learn from more proficient students and 63 percent found the more proficient students willing to help. Unlike the literature (Loughrin-Sacco, 1992), more of the heritage speakers apparently enjoy helping the non-heritage students, and the anglophones are less intimidated. Seventy-five percent thought the course was taught at its appropriate level, undistorted by the mixture; and only 12 percent thought a true beginner could not earn an A.

Serious curricular implications were found, however, in the fact that only 36 percent thought there should be accelerated courses and only 42 percent thought heritage courses should even be offered (not required). Indeed, 72 percent thought that, if offered, heritage courses should be optional to those who qualify to be in them. An overwhelming 94 percent thought one sequence was sufficient for everyone.

Another important question concerned how many students actually identified themselves as heritage speakers, as it seemed that many students who had significant exposure to the language did not so envision themselves. A second questionnaire was used in 1999 (See appendix.) with another 200 students in first and second-year Spanish. This time, seventy percent were Hispanic. Indeed, seventy percent of the Hispanics indicated that they were true beginners in the language, even though more than half of these individuals indicated prior exposure to Spanish, either hearing or speaking the language in the home, with family, and/or in the community.

Eighty percent indicated that they would not register for heritage classes and that they wanted to be in the regular sequence to use what they know to advantage and to make good grades. Thirty percent thought heritage courses would be too demanding. Clearly there was a discrepancy in faculty views of students and students' views of their own language backgrounds. Again, there was little interest in heritage courses.

#### A SPECIAL INFUSION

Since the program was already communicative and proficiency-oriented, cooperative-learning and pair activities were already used, cross-culture communication and Chicano literature were infused to some extent, some instructors included community-based activities, and expansion into the academic domains was available to some extent in the special-purposes courses, the primary element from the literature which could appear to be lacking was the sociolinguistic study. Thus the third questionnaire in 1999 and 2000 (See appendix.) focused on this area. Initially a limited amount of material about Southwest Spanish (See appendix.) was infused into second-year classes and selected second-semester classes in order to benefit heritage speakers by providing information they might normally have accessed in heritage classes or advanced classes (which they might never take) and to benefit non-heritage speakers who are very aware also that the language of the classroom and the language of the community are often not identical. The infusion was also intended to determine

whether this information would be of interest to the heritage student. Material on Southwest Spanish was presented as a handout to students and was discussed in classes on several occasions, as well as addressed via the third questionnaire to collect students' reactions to the material. Another 200 students participated, with nearly 70 percent Hispanics. One hundred percent of the students found the material helpful and interesting. Fifty percent wanted more information, 25 percent recommended creating a study guide, and 35 percent recommended creating a lower-division course on this topic. Fifty percent recommended offering heritage classes, slightly up from the 42 percent on the previous questionnaire; but 70 percent said to offer this material in the regular classes, that it was needed there.

Clearly the infusion of material about Southwest Spanish was well-received and should be continued. While it did not seem to create an instant and large increase in the number of students interested in heritage classes, there might be a trend there. A small amount of such instruction infused into the regular program might help over time to interest more students in heritage classes, and thus further material is being developed by the author.

### CONCLUSIONS

The road to meeting the needs of heritage students may be a bumpy one. Obviously not all students are interested in special courses, although this research suggests that students may be strongly interested in many of the components of successful instruction in

model programs for heritage students. Since the population is a very diverse one, perhaps the responses to meeting their needs can be equally diverse. As the students reported in the literature, many students in this context seem to prefer lower placements and higher grades at the same time that they are interested in a communicative class, task-based instruction, cooperative and pair learning, acquisition of varied academic vocabulary, ties to their culture and community, and a greater understanding of their Southwest language variety. For programs such as this one, with a similar cadre of students, perhaps an infusion curriculum is an appropriate option. Certainly it will meet the needs and interests expressed by the heritage students at this time, and it may later lead to an expansion of options for these students if a somewhat greater number of them eventually become interested in special courses.

For the time being, infusion will meet the students where they are and will overcome the special problem of many of the heritage learners seeing themselves as true beginners. Following Cubillo's (2000) advice about mixed classes and the incorporation of language variants, culture, and community along with communication, we may make our programs more successful. Infusing material about Southwest Spanish may add the final piece needed to address more of the students' needs and heighten their interest in the entire topic of developing as heritage learners.

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# APPENDIX A

## SPANISH CLASS PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In my Spanish class there are students who are \_\_\_\_\_: (Circle all letters that apply):
  - a. True beginners in the language. Students that have had little or no former experience with Spanish.
  - b. False beginners in the language. Students that have studied Spanish before entering the University.
  - c. Native speakers from the U.S. who have been exposed to Spanish but who do not speak it fluently.
  - d. Native speakers from the U.S. who are fluent in Spanish
  - e. Native speakers from Latin American countries who are very fluent.
2. My classification: (Circle one letter from a through f that best applies to you):
  - a. True beginner - I had little or no experience with Spanish before entering the University.
  - b. False beginner - I had studied Spanish before entering the University.
  - c. Native speaker from the U.S. but I do not consider myself *fluent* in Spanish.
  - d. Native speaker from the U.S.-I am fluent in Spanish.
  - e. Native speaker from another Latin America country - I am fluent in Spanish.
  - f. Other (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you been given a language placement exam at UTSA? (Circle one):
  - a. Yes      b. No
4. Is this your first university level Spanish language course? (Circle one):
  - a. Yes      b. No
5. How were you placed in your first Spanish course (which may be this course) at UTSA? (Circle the answer that best applies.)
  - a. I was placed in my first Spanish course based on the results of the placement exam.
  - b. I was placed in my first Spanish course based on the Advanced Placement credits I earned in high school.
  - c. I was placed in my first Spanish course based on the CLEF credits I earned.
  - d. I placed myself in my first Spanish course based on my own assessment of my Spanish language skills/needs.
6. If you placed yourself *below* your Spanish language level in your first Spanish course, which of the following best explains your reason for doing so. (Please circle the answer that best applies or fill in your own response.)
  - a. Because I didn't learn enough Spanish in my prior Spanish courses.
  - b. Because I wanted to be sure I had a firm foundation in the language before going on.
  - c. Because I felt I didn't remember much from my prior Spanish courses.
  - d. Because I wanted to improve or protect my GPA.
  - e. This question does not apply to me.
  - f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. In *this* course, do you think you are learning *at, above, or below* your current Spanish language ability?
 

(Circle one):      a. At my level                      b. Above my level.                      c. Below my level
8. Age: (Circle one):      a. 18 to 30 years                      b. 31 to 50 years                      c. over 50 years
9. Sex: (Circle one):      a. female                      b. male

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## SPANISH CLASS PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE (Continued)

[On the original form, for each item below the student designates strong agreement, agreement, no opinion, disagreement, or strong disagreement.]

10. Please mark the column that most closely describes your opinions or reactions to following statements.
- a. Students should have the right to register for any course for which they do not already have credit even if they are overqualified for the course.
  - b. Students should not be allowed to register below their placement level and should be required to register at their true proficiency-placement level.
  - c. Students should have the opportunity to test out of any lower level course for credit.
  - d. Over-proficient students often register for lower-level courses to improve their grade point average since successful testing results only in academic credit, not in grade point credit.
  - e. I feel I can learn from students who are more proficient than I am and I welcome their presence.
  - f. I feel intimidated by students who are more proficient than I am.
  - g. The more proficient students are usually helpful to others.
  - h. The more proficient students don't really want to help others.
  - i. The instructor calls on the more proficient students much more often.
  - j. The instructor calls on the on-level students more often.
  - k. The teacher involves all students more or less equally.
  - l. The level of the course is harder than it should be because of the more proficient students.
  - m. The instructor moves through the material too fast because the more proficient students already know it or learn it faster.
  - n. The false beginners/native speakers get all the good grades. A true beginner can hardly earn an A.
  - o. Anyone who does all the work and studies hard can earn an A or B in this class.
  - p. This course is targeted at a particular level in the language development sequence and the instructor generally stays at that level.
  - q. There should be accelerated courses for false beginners.
  - r. There should be special courses for speakers of U.S. Spanish focusing more on reading/writing and less on listening/ speaking.
  - s. Accelerated or special-speaker courses should be optional, not required, for those who qualify for them.
  - t. Each course should target a proficiency level. Then with appropriate placement, special or accelerated courses are not needed and all students will move from where they are to higher levels of proficiency.

# APPENDIX B

## LANGUAGE PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE SPRING 1999

In order to serve our students of Spanish better, we would like to make adaptations to OUT program based on the language profiles of our students. In order to do this, we need more information about your language background and hope that you will assist us by answering the following questions, anonymously, of course. We appreciate your help. When we refer to heritage/Spanish-speaker, these are courses which assume the student has been around Spanish a little (lower level) to a lot (higher level) and which target reading, writing, vocabulary expansion and culture and emphasize listening and speaking skills less than in courses for true beginners.

AGE RANGE (Check one.): ☐ Under 25 ☐ 26-39 ☐ Over 40 GENDER: ☐ M ☐ F

FAMILY LANGUAGE BACKGROUND (Check the one that best fits your background.):

- ☐ 1. I did not speak Spanish at home nor with relatives.
- ☐ 2. I did not speak Spanish at home but did with relatives or friends.
- ☐ 3. I heard Spanish at home but did not speak it.
- ☐ 4. I did not hear Spanish at home but did with relatives.
- ☐ 5. I spoke Spanish at home and with relatives.
- ☐ 6. I spoke Spanish at home, with relatives, and with friends.
- ☐ 7. I spoke Spanish at home, with relatives and friends, and at school and/or work.

FAMILY RESIDENCE BACKGROUND (Check the one that best fits your situation.)

- ☐ 8. I was born in the U.S., and so were my parents and grandparents.
- ☐ 9. I was born in the U.S., as were my parents; but my grandparents were not.
- ☐ 10. I was born in the U.S., but my parents and grandparents were not.
- ☐ 11. I was born outside the U.S.

YOUR VIEW OF YOUR SPANISH LANGUAGE SKILLS (Check the one that best fits you.)

- ☐ 12. I am a true beginner in the language because I've never spoken or studied it before now.
- ☐ 13. I consider myself a learner in progress because I've been around the language at home.
- ☐ 14. I'm a learner in progress who's been around the language at home and studied it before.
- ☐ 15. I'm a learner in progress—I studied the language before but not been around it otherwise.

YOUR VIEW OF HERITAGE SPEAKER/SPANISH SPEAKER COURSES (Check one.)

- ☐ 16. I would sign up for such a course at my level if the day, time, instructor, etc. were right.
- ☐ 17. I would not sign up for such a course because I am a true beginner.
- ☐ 18. I would not sign up for such a course even though I've been around Spanish some or a lot.

(If you checked Item 16 or 18, please continue. If Item 17, you are finished, and we thank you.)

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

- ☐ 19. I want the regular sequence as I don't know the language well & don't want to miss things.
- ☐ 20. I want to benefit from what I already know and be able to make an A in a regular class.
- ☐ 21. Special sections are discriminatory.
- ☐ 22. Special sections are likely to be too demanding.
- ☐ 23. Even though I've been around Spanish, I don't consider myself a Spanish-speaker.
- ☐ 24. In order to attract me a special course would need a better title, such as \_\_\_\_\_.

- \_25. I need a course with \_listening, \_speaking, \_reading, \_writing, \_grammar, \_vocabulary.
- \_26. I'd like a course that included study of Hispanic cultural heritage in the Southwest.
- \_27. I'd like to study cross-cultural comparisons and intercultural communication.
- \_28. In a special course I'd like \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_29. Overall my opinion of such special courses is \_\_\_\_\_.

## APPENDIX C

### SOUTHWEST SPANISH: UNDERSTANDING IT AND MAKING THE MOST OF IT

#### OVERVIEW

The Spanish language and Spanish speakers are spread all across the United States today; and Spanish is a second language here rather than a foreign language, making it an integral part of our society. Spanish has also risen dramatically in importance for us because of our vastly increased contact with people, agencies, and companies in the enormous entity known as Latin America (which some say even includes an overlay of the United States because of our history and the Hispanic cultures among our citizenry). Therefore, more and more students are studying Spanish at all levels of their education, for these reasons and many others.

The varieties of Spanish taught in our educational institutions are not always exactly like the varieties spoken in our communities, however. Just as we recognize that there are many varieties of English in the world today, we recognize that there are also many varieties of Spanish, deriving from many different national origins, social classes, regions, and other societal variants. We also recognize that there are different registers of Spanish, or levels of formality in our speech, just as there are in English and other languages. Because Spanish-speakers and heritage speakers of Spanish (those who are from the United States but who have lived and learned with Spanish as part of their families and/or communities), are ever more numerous in the United States, it is important that we recognize the vital natural resource that Spanish constitutes in our citizenry and our communities.

By understanding the variety of Spanish known in this country as Southwest Spanish, all those of us who are learning and/or using Spanish can do so even more effectively. Those who are learning Spanish for the first time can also learn at least in part to understand this important dialect of the language with which they will undoubtedly be in contact if they use the language in this environment. Those students who are heritage speakers of the language can learn more precisely how this variety of Spanish fits into the larger constellation of the entire Spanish-speaking world; and if they themselves and their families are speakers of Southwest Spanish, they can compare its characteristics with those of the more universal variety of the language taught in their classes. This comparison will empower them to add the additional form of the language to their repertoire more easily, building on the strengths they already possess from their lifelong exposure to the language, maintaining their Southwest Spanish for use in its appropriate settings, and adding the more universal forms to enable themselves to communicate more effectively in a broader context.

Southwest Spanish has many roots. First and foremost, it is Spanish and is especially related to the Spanish of rural Northern Mexico. It is also affected by English and contains anglicisms. It is a repository for some archaic forms of Spanish, which dropped from use long ago in more populated parts of the Spanish-speaking world, areas that have had more interaction with one another, especially through the media in more recent times, and where formal education has occurred through the medium of that language. Here the language evolved for a long time in more isolated communities, certain sound shifts and changes in usage have occurred and been reinforced without contact with those other areas and without significant widespread contact with print media in many instances.

Most beginning and intermediate Spanish texts treat transnational differences in the language, but none to date provide any extensive information about Southwest Spanish. While there are textbooks written especially for the heritage speaker population, many students who speak Southwest Spanish do not have access to or do not avail themselves of these courses and thus do not have the opportunity to compare their dialect with the more universal forms. In addition, some heritage speakers suffer from being told by relatives, community members, teachers or other contacts that their form of the language is inferior and best forgotten, when in fact they have an enormous advantage in the form of a variety of skills and knowledge that can easily be

expanded into a more fully utilizable and extremely valuable resource. The Southwest speaker will at least have comprehension skills and a start on natural-sounding pronunciation. They likely have some subconscious knowledge of syntax, and they possess a certain vocabulary. If this individual also speaks the language, he/she has an even greater advantage over the person who is just beginning the language.

If one is interested in being familiar with or in expanding Southwest Spanish for professional use, it is helpful to understand the characteristics of Southwest Spanish and how these compare to the more universal national forms of the language. In the material that follows, you will engage in a brief perusal of some of the areas of comparison. Should you find this material helpful, you can interact with your Spanish instructor regarding further readings and/or classes that would help you continue this vein of study.

#### LEXICON

1. While Southwest Spanish uses much universal vocabulary, there are also ANGLICISMS. Words such as *troca*, *biles*, *espear*, *huachar*, and *tichar* are common adaptations of English words. Expansion will help us add the universal words for these concepts to our repertoire.
2. There are also archaic forms. When we use *manear* for brakes, *truje* for brought or *estofada* for post office, we are using forms that were part of the language when it was brought here, but these are concepts for which speakers in other locales have since developed other terms. Other examples comprise *haiga*, *ansina*, *nadien*. A good course or resource helps us learn these new forms.
3. There are many cognates (words similar in two languages) for English and Spanish. Mathematics and *matemáticas* are a good example of the many pairs that help us to expand our vocabularies in both directions.

There are some false cognates, however, words which appear to be the same but are not. *Embarosado* and *constipado* are common and humorous examples of these; but there are other more subtle examples. *Educado* is a good example. In English it refers to formal education; in Spanish it refers to good manners, knowing how to treat others appropriately. *Letra*, *librería*, *atender*, *suc(c)eso*, *parientes*, *papel* and *nuevas* are additional examples.

4. In the Southwest we use many *mexicanismos*, words which work quite well in a Mexican national environment but which are sometimes different in other settings. *Ouajolote*, *tecolote* and *zoquete* are good examples. Again our classes and resources can help us become familiar with additional forms.
5. In the Southwest we tend, as do speakers in other parts of the Spanish-speaking world, to overwork some of our vocabulary and function with a rather limited repertoire in some cases. A good example is the verb *agarrar*, which we may use for getting the bus, getting a cold, getting the idea, etc., much as we might overwork "get" in English.
6. We also codeswitch, meaning that we mix English and Spanish into the same sentence, switch languages from one topic to another and switch languages from one listener to another.

#### GRAMMAR

1. In the Southwest we have sometimes changed the gender of vocabulary items. It is not uncommon to hear *la problema*, *la sistema*, *la mapa*, *el canción*, *la papá*. It is also common for us to translate the two-word verbs from English (to come back, to call back, to give back, for example) into Spanish as *llamar pa' iras*, *doy pa' tras*.

2. We change past participles, sometimes to regularize them, and not using the irregular forms common elsewhere. We say *murido, escrito, abrido, cubrido* instead of *muerto, escrito, abierto, cubierto*.
3. We may use prepositions in different ways. We may say *debo que ir* or *necesito que ir*. We may say *las cosas que ellos necesitan ayuda* instead of *las cosas con que* (or *con las cuales*) *ellos necesitan ayuda*.
4. We may mix *tú* and *usted* liberally and are generally less familiar with the use of this distinction.
5. We may use an archaic ending in the past, e.g., by saying *tú hablastes* or *tú hablates* instead of *tú hablaste*.

#### PRONUNCIATION

1. We may add sounds, as in the following examples: (a)tocar, (a)bajar, o(y)ir, cre(y)o, mu(n)cho.
2. We may subtract sounds, as in (a)hogarse, (ha)ber, (es)taba, telefon(o), pa(ra), clas(e). e(l)la, torti(l)la, ne(ce)sita, or tam(b)ién.
3. We may switch sounds, as in *luenga, ciudad, pader, porblema, estógamo*,
4. We may otherwise change sounds, as in *estoria, defecil, ofecina, joventud, dicir, dishonesto, nojotros, pos, gradar, experiencia, cencia*.

#### POSTSCRIPT

The foregoing are a few examples of the areas that are helpful for us to understand as we learn to communicate both in the Southwest environment and in a much broader one. Certainly the person who knows all the above forms already has much valuable vocabulary (though most heritage speakers don't exhibit all these forms) and, with the opportunity for study in class or with appropriate materials, can build on what is already known to broaden Southwest Spanish as a valuable resource and foundation for a universal Spanish.

#### TO LOWER DIVISION SPANISH STUDENTS

We are interested in knowing how you react to the reading on Southwest Spanish, as we are including material of this type in our classes. Please read the selection and answer the following questions, as your input would be very helpful to us. Thank you for assisting.

#### CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

- ☐ 1. The material is helpful.
- ☐ 2. The length is appropriate.
- ☐ 3. The material is too brief.
- ☐ 4. The points are clear.
- ☐ 5. More examples are needed.
- ☐ 6. Additional information is needed.
- ☐ 7. Delete some of it.
- ☐ 8. Create a self-study guide with tape/CD and exercises.
- ☐ 9. Create a lower division course to cover this in depth.
- ☐ 10. Offer courses for heritage speakers.
- ☐ 11. Include this material in the regular 1014, 1024, 2013, 2023.
- ☐ 12. This material is needed.
- ☐ 13. The tone of the material is positive and constructive.
- ☐ 14. Other comments:



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